**AP United States Government and Politics Course Syllabus**

**2019-2020 School Year**

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**Room Number: 48**

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**Course Description:**

AP U.S. Government and Politics is a college-level year-long course that not only seeks to prepare students for success on the AP Exam in May, but also provide students with the political knowledge and reasoning processes to participate meaningfully and thoughtfully in discussions and debates that are currently shaping American politics and society. It is important to note that this course is not a history course; it is a political science course that studies the interconnectedness of the different parts of the American political system and the behaviors and attitudes that shape this system and are the byproduct of this system. AP U.S. Government and Politics accomplishes these goals by framing the acquisition of political knowledge around enduring understandings and big ideas about American government and politics that can be applied to a set of disciplinary practices through the use of a set of reasoning processes. Through the development of this set of political knowledge, disciplinary practices, and reasoning processes, by the end of the course, students will be able to analyze current and historical political events like a political scientist and develop factually accurate, well-reasoned, thoughtful arguments and opinions that acknowledge and grapple with alternative political perspectives. The political knowledge, enduring understandings, and big ideas acquired and developed in each unit will be applied to the disciplinary practices using the reasoning processes outlined below. This is a year-long course.

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**Overview of Required Course Texts and Additional Resources:**

-Patterson, Thomas. *The American Democracy.* 10th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill.

**Supplemental Readings**

-Oyez – This online database provides succinct and accessible overviews for all Supreme Court cases.

-The National Constitution Center’s Interactive Constitution – This online resource is an annotated U.S. Constitution that includes essays from multiple perspectives that frame the debates underlying key clauses and provisions of the U.S. Constitution. The National Constitution Center also has a blog that applies constitutional principles to current events.

-*Time Magazine, The Week, The Washington Post, New York Times, Politico* and other selected readings from a variety of media sources

-Selected Readings from the *The Lanahan Readings in the American Polity*

-Other primary source and current event readings will be assigned throughout the class

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**Supplies Needed**

1. Pens and Pencils: You be writing in some form almost every day in class. I do not care what color you use as long as I can read it easily.

2. Large Notebook: This will be used to keep track of study materials and assignments

3. Notebook paper: You will need paper for in class activities

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**Grading**

Tests, Quizzes, Community Service, Major Projects and Major Papers 40%

Daily Work and Homework 40%

Final Exam 20%

**Tests and Projects:** You will be assessed on the information in this course in a variety of ways, including traditional and performance based assessment. Additionally you will complete various individual and group projects. These assignments will compose 40% of your grade.

**Daily Work and Homework:** Our class time will be divided between instructor-centered activities (lecture) and inquiry-based learning (simulations, debates, etc.) activities which will generate various short-term assignments to be completed either in-class, or on your own time and will make up 40% of your grade.

**Final Exam:** Every student will be required to take the end of course exam which will cover the material covered in class up to that point. The final exam will make up 20% of your grade.

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**Standing Assignments**

**Current Events Blog**

Students will complete a weekly assignment on current events using the Goggle Classroom for this class. Students will be required to read, and analyze the posted news assignment each week throughout the school year. **These posts cannot be turned in late.**

**ORCA Weekly Journal**

Each day when the bell rings you need to go quickly to your seat, get out your response sheet, and write your response to the ORCA journal on the board.

**Civic Engagement Project-Community Service/Service Learning**

There is a required civics project for this class. You will be required to complete one community service project in the fall (10 hours) and one community service project in the spring (10 hours). Students will complete their projects individually. At the conclusion of Unit 4 in the fall, students will present their project to their peers. Student’s presentations will include an oral and visual presentation. Students will need to explain how their project relates to an area of study in government and what they learned from their experience. This project will be discussed further in class and does count as a test grade.

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**Class Rules**

1. You are not in Congress yet, so you must behave civilly towards all teachers, administrators, and fellow students at all times.

- This means: no foul language (I’m the judge), appropriate volume, keeping hands, feet, objects to self, showing respect to others viewpoints and opinions; just follow the “Golden Rule”

2. I don’t like talking all day (although I can if I have to) so I expect active participation. We will have opportunities for debates and discussions in this class and expect **everyone** to participate!!!

3. Come to class on time, prepared every day with all you materials and a positive attitude. When the bell rings you should be in your seat.

-This means: bring a writing instrument, paper, your journal, your book, your work, and your smiling faces every day.

4. We work all class period, **no sleeping** and **no working on work for other classes**. I do not limit your bathroom passes, but you must use the pass responsibly and ask to use it at an appropriate time (one person out of the room at a time, five minutes in between people, ten-ten rule will be enforced). If you abuse your bathroom privileges they may be limited.

5. The bell **does not** dismiss class, I do. Everyone should remain seated in their seats until I dismiss you (why would you want to leave anyways?)

Additionally I will enforce all school rules which includes but is certainly not limited to the dress code, drug policy, and electronics policy.

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**Make Up Work**

For students that are absent, you have the number of days you were absent plus one. For example, if you were absent on Monday you should get your makeup work on Tuesday. That work you get would be due on Thursday. In order to get your makeup work you should see me at the start or end of class.

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**Late Work Policy**

**You do not have a right to do late work.  Late work will not receive full credit.** Turning things in on time is part of learning to become a productive citizen, try voting the day after an election or turning a report in to your boss late. See me about an assignment if you are not sure if it can be turned in late. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Extra Credit Policy**

Extra credit will be offered periodically throughout the semester in a variety of ways. Students who need extra credit should be aware of announcements made in class and information posted in the room. They may also see me before or after school if there are specific questions about an opportunity.

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**Overview of the AP Exam:**

The AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam will be comprised of the following sections:

Multiple-Choice Questions:

Number of Questions: 55

Structure – The questions on multiple choice will ask students to:

• Analyze and compare political concepts

• Analyze and interpret quantitative, text-based, and visual sources

• Apply course concepts, foundational documents, and Supreme Court decisions in a variety of hypothetical and real-world scenarios

Timing: One hour and 20 minutes

Percentage of Total Exam: 50%

Free-Response Questions:

Number of Questions: 4

Structure – The four questions on the free response will ask students to:

• Apply political concepts in real-world scenarios

• Compare the decisions and implications of different Supreme Court cases

• Analyze quantitative data

• Develop an argument using required foundational documents as evidence

Timing: One hour and 40 minutes

Percentage of Total Exam: 50%

As the breakdown of the AP Exam highlights, success in this course and on the AP Exam requires far more than the memorization of political knowledge. Success in this course and on the AP Exam requires connection-making with the aim of being able to analyze political information, regardless of the format the information is presented, and develop a factually accurate, thoughtful, and well-reasoned opinion regarding this information. The different pieces of the course fit together in pursuit of this aim through course content and big ideas, reasoning processes, and disciplinary practices.

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**Course Content and Big Ideas**

The course content consists of the essential political knowledge that will be synthesized in the construction of enduring understandings and big ideas about American government and politics. The big ideas that connect the content in the course units include:

• Constitutionalism (CON)

• Liberty and Order (LOR)

• Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy (PRD)

• Competing Policy-Making Interests (PMI)

• Methods of Political Analysis (MPA)

**Reasoning Processes**

The reasoning processes are the thought processes that will facilitate connection-making and analysis in the pursuit of effectively executing the disciplinary practices in the course. In other words, the reasoning processes form the cognitive bridge between the course content/big ideas and the disciplinary practices. The reasoning processes in this course include:

• Definition/Classification: Demonstrating knowledge of course concepts

• Explain - Process: Explaining political processes •

Explain - Causation: Explaining causes and effects of political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors

• Explain - Comparison: Explaining similarities and differences among political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors

**Disciplinary Practices**

The disciplinary practices are the tasks students will apply to the course content using the reasoning processes. Becoming proficient in these disciplinary practices gives students the tools to analyze political information, regardless of the format, and develop a factually accurate, thoughtful, and well-reasoned argument or opinion about an issue related to American government and politics. The disciplinary practices in this course include:

• Practice 1: Apply political concepts and processes to scenarios in context

• Practice 2: Apply Supreme Court decisions

• Practice 3: Analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and infographics

• Practice 4: Read, analyze, and interpret foundational documents and other text-based and visual sources

• Practice 5: Develop an argument in essay format Every AP Exam question fuses course content, reasoning processes, and disciplinary practices. Thus, in-class and outside of class assignments will focus on the acquisition of course content and the application of course content to disciplinary practices using reasoning skills.

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**Required Supreme Court Cases**

-This course will incorporate the analysis of the following 15 required Supreme Court cases:

• Marbury v. Madison (1803)

• McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)

• Schenck v. United States (1919)

• Brown v. Board of Education (1954) • Baker v. Carr (1961)

• Engel v. Vitale (1962)

• Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)

• Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969)

• New York Times Company v. United States (1971)

• Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)

• Roe v. Wade (1973)

• Shaw v. Reno (1993)

• United States v. Lopez (1995)

• McDonald v. Chicago (2010)

• Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (FEC) (2010)

Students will be provided opportunities to analyze the 15 required Supreme Court cases as described in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework and connect them to other non-required landmark cases. For each of these cases, the facts, issues, holdings, and reasoning underlying the majority and dissenting opinions can be found through the Oyez database online. Oyez also has an app that can be downloaded to smartphones. Students will be required to complete multiple assignments analyzing and comparing these cases with other non-required cases.

The list above is not an exhaustive list of the Supreme Court cases that will be analyzed and discussed in this course. Additionally, students will have access to information about the cases and the majority/dissenting opinion excerpts for cases that complement the required cases, such as:

• Gonzales v. Raich (2005) to go along with the analysis of McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)

• Heart of Atlanta Motels v. United States (1964) to go along with the analysis of United States v. Lopez (1995)

• Zelman v. Simmons-Harris (2002) to go along with the analysis of Engel v. Vitale (1962)

• Morse v. Frederick (2007) to go along with the analysis of Tinker v. Des Moines (1969)

**Required Foundational Documents**

This course will incorporate the analysis and discussion of nine required foundational documents to help understand the context and beliefs of the founders and their critics and the debates surrounding the writing and ratification of the U.S. Constitution:

• The Declaration of Independence

• The Articles of Confederation

• Federalist No. 10

• Brutus No. 1

• Federalist No. 51

• The Constitution of the United States

• Federalist No. 70

• Federalist No. 78

• “Letter from Birmingham Jail”

**Class Contract**

(sorry no signing bonus)

My name and signature on this page signifies that I have received a copy of the syllabus and classroom rules from Mr. Riley. I understand that I will be expected to give my best effort and have a good attitude. I have been allowed to ask questions, and understand that I can ask Mr. Riley questions in the future if I need to. Mr. Riley has encouraged me to share these policies and rules with my parents and/or guardians and informed them that they are free to contact him. In return I will receive as compensation an excellent education and the chance to learn the rights and responsibilities of a strong and productive citizen of this country.

**DATE:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Student’s Printed Name (First/Last):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Parent’s Printed Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Parent’s Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

\* I will send periodic class updates through e-mail.

**Parent’s E-mail:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**